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## SOME ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF IMMIGRATION BEFORE 1870. II

The following tables are constructed from the statistics of the ninth census. The first table shows what per cent of the population over ten years of age, and what percentage of all persons in certain typical occupations, was composed of natives, what per cent was composed of the four leading races of European immigrants—that is, of British (including English, Scotch, and Welsh), Irish, German, and Scandinavian—and what percentage was composed of other immigrants. The second table shows what percentage of the natives and of each of the four European races entered the selected industries.

### TABLE I

CLASSIFICATION, BY NATIVITY, OF ALL PERSONS ENGAGED IN CERTAIN SPECIFIED  
OCCUPATIONS, 1870

The Nativity-Figures Are Stated as Percentages of the Total Number of Persons  
in Each Occupation

	Natives	Four Leading European Races	Other Immigrants
Population over ten years of age.....	81.21	15.40	3.39
Persons in gainful occupations.....	78.37	18.13	3.50
Persons in agriculture.....	89.54	8.58	1.88
Farmers and planters.....	86.31	11.62	2.07
Agricultural laborers.....	93.56	4.90	1.54
Persons in professional and personal serv- ices.....	69.21	26.37	4.42
Laborers (not specified).....	58.36	35.74	5.90
Domestic servants.....	74.73	22.13	3.14
Learned professions.....	87.79	9.41	2.80
Persons in trade and transportation.....	71.57	23.64	4.79
Shop keepers and dealers.....	71.88	23.90	4.22
Officials of companies.....	90.82	8.09	1.09
Clerks of companies, banks, stores...	82.12	14.95	2.93
Employees of companies.....	65.60	31.22	3.18
Persons in manufacturing, mining, me- chanical arts.....	65.66	28.39	5.95
Miners and quarriers.....	38.20	44.82	16.98
Textile operatives.....	61.02	33.39	5.59
Iron and steel operatives.....	56.49	40.48	3.03
Artisans.....	59.86	27.69	12.43

TABLE II

PERCENTAGES OF ALL PERSONS OVER TEN YEARS OF AGE IN THE SEVERAL  
NATIVITY-GROUPS, WHO WERE, IN 1870, ENGAGED IN EACH OF THE  
SPECIFIED OCCUPATIONS

	Natives	Irish	Germans	British	Scandinavian
All gainful occupations.....	<b>42.70</b>	<b>53.53</b>	<b>51.89</b>	<b>50.87</b>	<b>47.58</b>
Agriculture.....	<b>23.13</b>	<b>7.82</b>	<b>13.93</b>	<b>12.93</b>	<b>21.90</b>
Farmers and planters.....	11.20	5.02	9.87	9.24	13.13
Agricultural laborers.....	11.78	2.45	3.56	3.12	8.64
Professional and personal services ..	<b>8.10</b>	<b>24.02</b>	<b>11.86</b>	<b>8.52</b>	<b>12.72</b>
Laborers (not specified).....	2.62	12.95	5.98	3.76	6.70
Domestic servants.....	3.18	8.24	2.65	2.17	4.89
Learned professions.....	0.61	0.37	0.61	0.59	0.16
Trade and transportation.....	<b>3.76</b>	<b>6.73</b>	<b>6.97</b>	<b>5.51</b>	<b>4.15</b>
Shop keepers and dealers.....	1.19	1.67	3.43	1.98	0.60
Officials of companies.....	0.026	0.010	0.009	0.024	0.004
Clerks in companies, stores, banks.....	0.85	0.56	1.07	1.00	0.47
Employees of companies.....	0.55	2.26	0.61	0.78	1.78
Manufacturing, mining, mechanical arts.....	<b>7.75</b>	<b>14.95</b>	<b>19.12</b>	<b>23.87</b>	<b>8.80</b>
Miners and quarriers.....	0.27	1.51	0.62	4.87	0.76
Textile operatives.....	0.63	2.23	0.48	3.53	0.22
Iron and steel operatives.....	0.19	0.89	0.50	1.16	0.11
Artisans.....	3.37	4.63	11.70	7.73	5.01

These tables show that of all persons industrially employed the percentage of Europeans was large out of proportion to their numbers; the second table shows that more than half of all Europeans, except the Scandinavians, who fell little short of half, were at work, while less than 43 per cent of the natives were in any gainful occupation. In other words, the amount of labor furnished by Europeans was considerably greater in proportion to their numbers in this country than was that furnished by native Americans. This, of course, is readily explained on two grounds. In the first place, relatively few immigrants were raised by the ownership of property above the necessity of working for a living. In the second place, there was among them a disproportionately small number of persons either too old or too young to work, nearly 70 per cent of them being between fifteen and forty years of age on arrival.

But while the four leading races of European immigrants supplied more than 18 per cent of all the labor in the country, their labor was not equally distributed in the great fields of productive industry. They composed only 8.58 per cent of those engaged in agriculture; that is about half as many as would have been thus engaged, had they taken to agriculture in the same proportion as did the natives. The Scandinavians were the only European race that showed a tendency to agricultural pursuits nearly as strong as that of native Americans. It should be remembered, however, that included among the natives were the Negroes, and nearly all of these were engaged in agricultural pursuits in the southern states; the disparity in numbers, therefore, between the immigrants and the white Americans thus occupied was not altogether so great as the figures indicate. It is interesting to notice that most of the foreigners who entered this field were independent farmers and planters; less than 5 per cent of the hired laborers in agriculture were European.

It was so frequently urged by contemporaries that the main inducement to European emigration was the cheap and fertile land of America, that it is at first thought rather startling to find so small a proportion of them tilling the soil. Not quite 22 per cent of the Scandinavians over ten years of age, 14 per cent of the Germans, 13 of the British, and less than 8 per cent of the Irish were in agriculture. The truth is that the acquisition of land has never been the immediate expectation of the majority of immigrants. They were ready to embrace the first opportunity to earn a livelihood; and while cheap land attracted many of them to America by holding out hope of ultimately owning a home, they were forced to seek employment as wage-earners in order to accumulate the means of obtaining it. A large part of those enumerated as farmers in 1870 were people whose thrift and severe economy had furnished them after their arrival in this country with the capital necessary to establish themselves on the soil.<sup>1</sup> But while some attained the realization of this hope, many more were disappointed. For the cost of the land was always but a small part of the sum needed to begin life as a farmer. The lowest estimate

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Report of a Committee of N.Y. Legislature*, 1857.

put this sum at two hundred dollars,<sup>1</sup> while a more reasonable though still a very low estimate made it twice as great. An English writer fixed the capital needed by an immigrant before the passage of the Homestead Act, to settle on an eighty-acre tract in the Northwest at £80 distributed as follows:<sup>2</sup>

	£	s.	d.
3 cows and a yoke of oxen . . . . .	10	0	0
42 sheep . . . . .	2	0	0
Farm wagon . . . . .	10	0	0
House . . . . .	15	0	0
Seed corn and garden seed . . . . .	1	0	0
Pig and poultry . . . . .	0	12	0
Family expenses thirty weeks . . . . .	10	0	0
Cost of 80 acres . . . . .	20	0	0
Horse . . . . .	10	0	0

This does not include the cost of transportation to the West, the necessary household goods, nor the expense of clearing the land and preparing it for cultivation. The latter expense in the case of forest land was very heavy, and it was not much less for prairie land. "The conquering of the prairies presented peculiar difficulties. . . . The ground was hard, and the grasses and roots of shrubs were deep down and uncommonly tough. It was estimated that the expense of bringing prairie land under culture was as great as in the case of the woodlands."<sup>3</sup> For those settling on forest land, after the trees had been felled and cut into suitable length, the "log rolling" was slow and difficult, requiring at least two men and a yoke of oxen a day for each acre;<sup>4</sup> while grubbing up the stumps and getting out the roots was put at no less than fourteen dollars an acre—many times more than the original cost of the land.<sup>5</sup> A large part of this work, as is well known, was never done. Many settlers either belted the trees and let them die or cut them down and waited for the stumps to rot; but under such management the difficulty of cultivation was enormous; the land

<sup>1</sup> Büchele, *Land und Volk der Vereinigten Staaten*, 454.

<sup>2</sup> Smith, *The Settler's New Home*, 106.

<sup>3</sup> Lippincott, *Journal of Political Economy*, XVIII, 276 n.

<sup>4</sup> Straten-Ponthoz, *Forschungen über d. Lage der Auswanderer in d. Vereinigten Staaten*, 153.

<sup>5</sup> Jörg, *Briefe aus den Vereinigten Staaten*, 205.

could not be plowed among the stumps with less than six or eight yoke of oxen;<sup>1</sup> the cost of implements was greatly increased; and the harvest more than proportionately diminished. Furthermore, the estimate quoted above makes no allowance for the failure of crops and the strong probability, indeed the practical certainty, that the new settler would not be self-supporting in thirty weeks. Few were the Europeans that could adapt themselves to a new climate and learn the new methods necessary in forest or prairie quickly enough to make a living in the first year of settlement.

Though the lack of capital was the chief obstacle to farming in the way of the immigrant, there were other strong deterrents. Many who left Europe with the intention of proceeding inland suffered such hardships on the voyage that the spirit failed them for the trying land journey, even where illness did not compel them to forego it.<sup>2</sup> Descriptions of the arduous nature of rural life in the West, the toil and privation, the uncertainty of crops, climatic dangers, the horrors of isolation, all these things loomed larger on closer approach and assumed to the immigrant on arrival in a strange country after a long and debilitating voyage a more dreadful aspect than they presented to him in his European home.<sup>3</sup> The influence of acquaintances in the cities, more especially the opportunity to secure remunerative employment, were frequently sufficient to cause a change of intention even in such as were financially able to purchase and stock a farm. It should be remembered, furthermore, that a great many who actually did take up land were not able long to hold it. The hardship and uncertainty of farm life were very real and not the figments of timid imagination.<sup>4</sup> European experience as a husbandman was of very little value in American farming,<sup>5</sup> and some writers assert that half the immigrant farmers failed because of their inability to endure the arduous and isolated life, to apply new methods, and accommodate themselves to new conditions.<sup>6</sup> Acquaintance with the crops and conditions of another hemisphere was not so useful as sound, quick,

<sup>1</sup> Straten-Ponthoz, 149.

<sup>2</sup> 43d Cong., Senate Exec. Doc., 23, 166.

<sup>3</sup> Maguire, *The Irish in America*, 215.

<sup>4</sup> Jörg, 197 ff.; Straten-Ponthoz, 142.

<sup>5</sup> Büchele, 447, *et al. plur.*

<sup>6</sup> Jörg, 120 ff.

adaptable, determined body and mind, and the European thus endowed was more likely to succeed in agriculture than if he had merely been raised as a peasant.<sup>1</sup> To a man with such qualities, however, other occupations were more likely to appeal than tilling the soil. When to all that has been said is added the malign influence of land speculators with their false representations, and the ruin so often caused by defective titles,<sup>2</sup> it is no longer difficult to understand why the percentage of Europeans in agriculture was small.

It cannot be shown that the system or the methods of American agriculture were materially furthered by the influence of immigrants. Here and there a horticulturist or gardener achieved results that opened the eyes of a few of his neighbors to possibilities till then unknown. In some of the eastern states "improved" farms were occasionally purchased by Englishmen, Scotchmen, and more rarely Germans, who were able to apply capital and some knowledge of modern scientific agriculture.<sup>3</sup> But the force of their example was weak, for new ideas and improved processes are notoriously slow to spread in a rural population. Doctor Büchele did indeed assert, about 1855, that the prosperity of American agriculture was due to the example of the thrifty German farmers, but he adduced no evidence in proof of his assertion.<sup>4</sup> It appears, on the contrary, that any methods of foreigners different from those already in vogue, being "outlandish," were held in suspicion and contempt. This was strongly exemplified in Texas. The prosperity of the German farmers in that state was well known, and has been attractively described by Frederick Law Olmsted; but the same writer shows that the native planters had little intercourse with them and eschewed their laborious though thrifty methods of cultivation.

In the main they strove to learn and to adopt the methods of the American farmer rather than to apply the more intensive methods that had developed in Europe; and in the West a generation ago little was known of any system of tillage beyond a simple

<sup>1</sup> Fröbel, *Die Deutsche Auswanderung und ihre culturhistorische Bedeutung*, 16.

<sup>2</sup> Grund, *Handbuch und Wegweiser für Auswanderer*, 49.

<sup>3</sup> Niles' *Register*, LX, 400; LXIII, 288.

<sup>4</sup> Büchele, 278.

exploitation of the land. Indeed, even in the more populous eastern states, scientific agriculture is of recent growth. As late as 1870 the writer who contributed a *History of American Agriculture* to the ninth census found in it little of interest besides the invention of labor-saving machinery. The fertility stored through centuries in a virgin soil was, it is true, a proper object of exploitation; but when after some years of cultivation this fertility began to wane, the farmer did not readily lay aside his ruinous methods and "rip-and-tear" processes. In the newly settled regions, throughout the nineteenth century the raising of crops was hardly the first consideration of the Americans who took up land. They seldom sought from the soil more than a subsistence; the profits they expected lay in the enhanced value of the land they secured—an unearned increment certain to follow increased population—rather than in agricultural produce for which it was not always easy to find a market. The only tillage necessary, therefore, was such as would supply the family needs during the wait for an opportunity to sell out to advantage and migrate farther west. They devised to that end methods of cultivation that with the minimum of labor would achieve the desired result; and these methods the immigrant farmer usually appropriated. He adopted them the more readily because he seldom possessed capital enough to improve on them and because hired labor was almost impossible to secure.<sup>1</sup> "Class relations here," wrote a German farmer in the Northwest, "are the reverse of those in Europe; the laborers are haughty, insolent, and pleasure seeking like their oppressors in the Old World. They think that as this is a free country a promise to work is in no way binding. Even the German workmen seem to have left their sense of honor behind along with the police and the bureaucracy and their insolent and untrustworthy behavior is enough to make a German himself doubt the reputation of his race for fidelity and honesty."<sup>2</sup> With little capital and less labor there was small chance for European settlers to apply scientific methods of tillage; and they were distinguished from their American neighbors by little else than a more parsimonious life, a greater

<sup>1</sup> Grund, 9; Jörg, 147.

<sup>2</sup> Jörg, 148 ff.



expenditure of personal labor, a somewhat greater care for details, and the more general use in the fields of the labor of their women and children.<sup>1</sup>

But although they contributed little to the science of agriculture, there can be no reasonable doubt that the 346,226 farmers and planters in the United States, who belonged to the four leading races of European immigrants in 1870, were a distinct gain to the nation. They were industrious, law-abiding, and self-supporting. They went far to make good the drain on the agricultural population caused by the Civil War. They aided in clearing the wild lands of the West, and in reducing to the service of man untouched natural resources.<sup>2</sup> Their mere presence added enormously to the value of lands and resources that were already under development. They were assimilated with amazing rapidity into the national life, and they and their children have borne their full share in the promotion of civilization on the continent. Without doubt had they never come to America the natural increase of the native population would in time have occupied the lands they settled and have accomplished much that has been attained by their labor. But through their arrival national wealth and national power have grown more quickly, and it cannot be shown that a purely native population would ever have achieved higher or better results than those due to them and to their descendants.

The Europeans in 1870 were more than a fourth of all the persons in those occupations that are grouped as professional and personal services, a far larger proportion than they composed of those in agriculture. This was due to the Irish, who were the only one of the four leading immigrant races that preferred these occupations to tilling the soil. Representatives of these races were found, of course, as barbers, dancing masters, musicians, livery stable keepers, boot blacks, and in a score of other employments demanding personal service; but the three significant occupations in this group, of which the first two embraced the greater part of all persons thus catalogued, were the unskilled laborers, the domestic servants, and those in the learned pro-

<sup>1</sup> See description of farm life in Jörg, I, 197 ff.

<sup>2</sup> 42d Cong., 1st sess., House Report, No. 1, p. v.

fessions. The Europeans were nearly 36 per cent of the laborers (not specified—which means unskilled) and more than 22 per cent of the domestic servants. The natives composed more than 58 per cent of the laborers and nearly 75 per cent of the domestic servants; but as the Negroes of the South were classed as natives, the number of white Americans in these categories was much smaller than the figures indicate. It appears moreover from Table II that in proportion to their numbers, even including these classes, the natives contributed fewer persons to this group than did any immigrant race. Of all the Irish over ten years old nearly a fourth were in these employments, about 13 per cent being laborers and more than 8 per cent domestic servants. Next came the Scandinavians, who in proportion to their number contributed little more than half as many servants and unskilled laborers as did the Irish; and after them the Germans; while a very small fraction of the British were in these menial positions.

Under the head of "Learned Professions" in the tables are included architects, authors and lecturers, chemists, clergymen, journalists, land surveyors, lawyers, metallurgists, officers of the army and navy, physicians and surgeons. Of those in the learned professions the European nations formed less than 10 per cent, the natives nearly 88 per cent; and this bears out the general impression that in proportion to their numbers few immigrants were in the higher walks of life. This impression was not fair, however, to the German race considered by itself; exactly as large a proportion of them as of the natives were in professional life in this country—the chief professions represented being those of doctors and preachers; nor were the British far behind them. Of the great multitude of Irish immigrants, on the other hand, the proportion entering the professions was far smaller, while for the Scandinavians the fraction was almost negligible.

In the occupations grouped under the head of "Trade and Transportation" the immigrants did not figure altogether so largely as in personal services, and yet in proportion to their numbers those thus employed were far more numerous than the natives. The Germans brought with them their notorious partiality for shop keeping, and were found in all sorts of mercantile establish-

ments from the saloon to the wholesale importing house. Little less than  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent of them, nearly twice as large a proportion as of any other race, were listed as shopkeepers and dealers. Among them were merchants of high standing and credit; but the great majority were small retail traders, the keepers of general stores, dealers in groceries, liquors, drygoods, ready-made clothing, cigars, and tobacco. Doctor Büchele, writing a few years before the Civil War, thought it significant of their low financial standing that in the eastern and southern states no German had ever been president of a bank.<sup>1</sup> As keepers of restaurants and bars they were more than twice as numerous as the Irish. A keenly intelligent German observer attributed much of the ill treatment of his fellow countrymen and the dislike Americans felt for them to the fact that they played here the part played by the Jews among the Slavs, as keepers of small retail shops, bar-rooms, low groceries, and cheap eating houses.<sup>2</sup> Even in a city so strongly German as Milwaukee, nine-tenths of the merchants on the better streets were Americans, while the German shopkeepers were usually found in the lower, less healthful, and poorer parts of the town.<sup>3</sup> In many American towns and villages retail trading was greatly overdone by these German immigrants. They were too ignorant of customs, tastes, and fashions to secure customers in increasing number; competition was keen among them; and they lacked capital and credit for building up their business. The merchants of the interior almost universally procured their goods on credit from houses in the eastern cities; but as a German merchant in a western town could seldom get credit in the East except from a German house, his supplies were apt to consist of goods imported from Germany,<sup>4</sup> and these as a rule did not stand well at that date and usually had to be falsely labeled in order to be readily sold.<sup>5</sup>

In positions of trust and high remuneration, as administrators and officials of banks, incorporated trade enterprises, and other companies (under the head of companies are included express, insurance, railroad, street railroad, and telegraph companies)

<sup>1</sup> Büchele, 284.

<sup>2</sup> Jörg, 227.

<sup>3</sup> Büchele, 198.

<sup>4</sup> Straten-Ponthoz, 190.

<sup>5</sup> Fröbel, 75.

the immigrant races were less well represented than as small independent shopkeepers. According to Table I nearly 91 per cent of such officials were natives, and little more than 8 per cent were Europeans. In proportion to their number, however, the British serving in this capacity were nearly as numerous as the Americans; but less than half as many of the Irish were in such positions, still fewer of the Germans, and only four in a hundred thousand of the Scandinavians. Europeans were more numerous employed as clerks, bookkeepers, and accountants of such companies, than as officials. Of all persons in these minor positions they formed nearly 15 per cent. Those thus employed were mainly Germans and British; the Irish and Scandinavians were poorly represented even in clerical positions which, though unimportant, yet involved some degree of education. Competition for such positions was particularly keen by reason of the fact that sufficient training for them was given by the public schools in the United States, and many natives who were physically or otherwise incapacitated for more strenuous work could still discharge the duties of a clerkship.<sup>1</sup> As a result many competent and well-trained young accountants and bookkeepers who came from Europe in search of employment were obliged to go to work as laborers on the canals and railroads.<sup>2</sup> Of the mere employees, which means the common laborers, hired by the companies under consideration the Europeans formed nearly a third, and the natives less than two-thirds. Here, as among the common laborers in personal services, the Irish vastly predominated. No less than  $2\frac{1}{4}$  per cent of them were wage-earners of chartered companies, a proportion nearly twice as great as that of the Scandinavians, three times that of the British, about four times that of the Germans, and nearly five times that of native Americans—a fact in evidence of the statement frequently made that our early railroads and canals were in the main constructed by Irish labor.

It was in those occupations grouped under the head of "Manufacturing, Mining, and the Mechanical Arts" that Europeans were most numerous. Of all thus employed the four leading European

<sup>1</sup> Mooney, *Nine Years in America*, 142.

<sup>2</sup> Büchele, 423.

races formed 28.39 per cent and the natives only 65.39 per cent. A hundred and seventy-two separate vocations are enumerated in this group, but those most indicative of the economic significance of the immigrants are the work of miners and quarriers, iron and steel operatives, and artisans. In mines and quarries the Europeans greatly outnumbered the natives, with respectively 44.82 per cent and 38.20 per cent. The British—particularly the Welsh and English—were the leading races in this work. There were many Irish laborers in the mines; even as far west as Wisconsin they were working in the lead mines at a very early date,<sup>1</sup> and they made their way in considerable numbers to the California gold fields where individuals among them achieved brilliant success; but the Irish miners were much fewer than the British, not only in proportion to their total number in this country but also by actual count. The continental races were more sparsely represented in this work than the Irish; only 0.76 per cent of the Scandinavians and 0.62 per cent of the Germans were engaged in it.

It is probable that mining, more than any other field of production, has benefited by immigration. Particularly in the period now under consideration, it was difficult to secure American laborers for underground work. The profits of employers were not great enough to enable them to pay wages sufficient in the eyes of native workmen to compensate for the danger and discomfort of the occupation. Mining, furthermore, was of too recent growth in this country to have permitted the development of the necessary aptitude and skill; and no American community had been bred to the work. When once an industry has been well established, "great are the advantages which people following the same skilled trade get from near neighborhood to one another. The mysteries of the trade become no mysteries, but are as it were in the air, and children learn many of them unconsciously. Good work is rightly appreciated, inventions and improvements in machinery, in processes and the general organization of the business have their merits promptly discussed . . . ,"<sup>2</sup> and it becomes a matter of course that wage workers as they grow to manhood in the neighbor-

<sup>1</sup> Mooney, 113.

<sup>2</sup> Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, I, 352.

hood should enter the industry already established there. But mining in America had not yet become an industry of this character. Americans by reason of taste, training, and ancient usage looked to other fields of employment, and labor for the mines was difficult to find. In England and Wales, on the other hand, the industry had been long and highly developed; and the British workmen in the mining regions through many generations of training had reached the greatest efficiency till then attainable. The migration of such men to the United States was, under the conditions then prevailing, of great economic importance. Their arrival made possible a development of American coal and iron fields that without them would have been indefinitely postponed. They promoted this development not only by adding enormously to the available supply of labor for such work, but also by imparting a knowledge of methods and processes that greatly enhanced the value of the labor furnished by other races. A study of the early growth of such communities as Johnstown<sup>1</sup> or Shenandoah in Pennsylvania<sup>2</sup> affords indisputable evidence of the influence exerted by the skilled miners of England and Wales.

Toward the end of the period under review such men became less necessary for the continuance of the development their labor had promoted. American inventiveness and genius for organization had gradually altered the system, methods, and processes of mining to such a degree that the special training needed by the miner could be acquired with less expenditure of time and teaching; and, meanwhile, men of the intelligence and general ability of the English and Welsh workmen learned to understand the opportunities offered in America by other forms of employment. The inevitable result of these changed conditions was indicated by a significant occurrence at Shenandoah in 1870 when, bad relations having arisen between laborers and employers, the old workmen left the mines, and their places were filled by the first immigration to that region from eastern Europe.<sup>3</sup> The labor that developed the bituminous coal fields has always been supplied in large measure, and that for the anthracite fields almost wholly, by immigrants and

<sup>1</sup> Immigration Commission, Community Reports, Johnstown, MSS, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Shenandoah, MSS, *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, MSS, 33.

their offspring of the first generation.<sup>1</sup> The children of native-born miners as a rule have not followed their fathers' trade, and without immigration neither the coal nor the iron-mining industry would have expanded with anything like the rapidity witnessed by the nineteenth century. Without doubt the presence in the mines since 1875 of great numbers of foreigners with uncouth usages and a relatively low standard of life has deterred many natives from entering the work; but it was only one of a number of deterrents in this later period, and it had little or no influence in the period preceding.

The part played by European immigrants in the development of American manufactures was of little less importance than their work in mining. Of all the operatives in iron and steel works in 1870, Europeans composed about 40½ per cent and natives 56½ per cent. In this field as in mining the British figured most largely with 1.16 per cent of their total number in this country over ten years of age to 0.89 per cent for the Irish, 0.50 per cent for the Germans, 0.11 for the Scandinavians, and 0.19 for the natives. As in mining so in the manufacture of iron and steel Great Britain had long led the world, and it was to her that American employers were forced to turn for the skilled labor necessary to establish and promote their industry. Before the middle of the century a molder of native birth was hard to find in any American city, and the same was true of many other skilled trades in the iron industry. Such workers were apt to be English, Welsh, or Scotch with Irish helpers.<sup>2</sup> The important manufacture of cutlery at Meriden, Connecticut, was developed with the aid of English workmen who had acquired their skill at Birmingham and Sheffield.<sup>3</sup> Until 1858 no less than seven-tenths of all the employees of the Cambria Steel Company at Johnstown were Welsh who had learned their trade before emigrating.<sup>4</sup> In 1866 when a steel plant was first established at Steelton, Pennsylvania, though the main labor force was recruited among the "Pennsylvania Dutch," it was to England that the employers sent for the skilled workers

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, MSS, 72.

<sup>2</sup> Mooney, 120.

<sup>3</sup> Immigration Com., Community Reports, Meriden, MSS.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Community Reports, Johnstown, MSS, 24.

that were necessary to make the business a success.<sup>1</sup> Additional instances without number might be cited to show the contribution of immigrants to the growth of this industry. They promoted development not only by supplying labor for the lower grades of work, but also by doing work that natives could not do and by teaching methods and processes that the natives did not know. In 1850, for example, improvements in the hardware business at New Britain, Connecticut, led the employers to advertise abroad for machinists and lock-makers. This brought over thirty skilled laborers from Germany, and their influence soon induced others to follow; without them expansion according to modern methods would have been for a long time impossible.<sup>2</sup>

In the textile industries Europeans played a less important part than in the manufacture of iron and steel. Although the number employed in this field had been steadily increasing for more than a generation they composed only 33.39 per cent of the textile operatives in 1870, as against 61.02 per cent for the natives. Of the races engaging in this work the British contributed in proportion to their total number in this country a larger percentage than any other, but the Irish with a smaller relative percentage were actually much more numerous as textile operatives, inasmuch as they outnumbered the British in the United States nearly three to one. Germans and Scandinavians were found in the textile works in even smaller numbers than in mining. The native operatives in the manufacture of cloth were more than twice as numerous as the native miners, and more than three times the number of natives in the iron and steel works.

Before immigration to this country attained any considerable volume, the manufacture of cloth had already become well established. Its comparatively early rise was due to the fact that there was available for this work a class of labor that could not be used in mining, the iron works, and many other branches of manufacturing, namely, the labor of women and children. The organization and methods of the cloth industry, the machinery used, and the processes applied were adapted to the utilization of this class of labor; and as long as such labor could be had in adequate

<sup>1</sup> Immigration Com., Community Reports, Steelton, MSS, 99.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, New Britain, MSS, 27.



quantity the industry underwent little development other than mere physical expansion. In the adoption of heavier and speedier machinery and the application of more highly specialized processes imposing a greater physical and nervous strain on the laborer, America during the first half of the nineteenth century lagged far behind Great Britain. Mule spinning, for example, though introduced here in 1817, was little used as late as 1840.<sup>1</sup> Henry C. Carey wrote in 1830 that the mule was not to be found in any Lowell factory, "and the consequence is that female labor here takes the place of male labor in England."<sup>2</sup> In this instance, as in some others, this most celebrated of early American economists converted cause into consequence: it was not the absence of the mule that caused the employment of female labor, but, on the contrary, the mule was not used in Lowell because only female labor was available in the mills, and such labor was not adapted to mule spinning. When Carey wrote, 80 per cent of all the operatives in the Massachusetts cotton mills, and nearly 70 per cent in the country as a whole, were women, in the main the daughters of New England farmers, for whom there was then no other field of remunerative employment. "The fertile prairies of the West had already attracted the more energetic young men, but their sisters remained at home. . . . A girl's opportunities for making money were few, and the amount received was small for such employment as straw braiding, binding shoes, dressmaking, or domestic labor."<sup>3</sup> The annual earnings of mill hands were several times as much as an educated woman was paid for teaching.<sup>4</sup> The abundant supply rendered labor cheap for the mills but it was not very efficient, and the supply was precarious. The average mill girl expected to remain at work for only a short time; many worked half the year in order to go to school the other half,<sup>5</sup> so there was no permanent body of employees, and a very large proportion of inexperienced hands in every factory.<sup>6</sup> Conse-

<sup>1</sup> Abbott, *Journal of Political Economy*, XVI, 612.

<sup>2</sup> Carey, *Essay on the Rate of Wages*, 75.

<sup>3</sup> Lucy Larcom, *Atlantic Monthly*, XLVIII, 595.

<sup>4</sup> Abbott, *Journal of Political Economy*, XVI, 688.

<sup>5</sup> Lucy Larcom, *New England Girlhood*, 222.

<sup>6</sup> Abbott, 686.

quently the employers sought to exploit their labor force in such a way as to insure high profits without incurring the cost of making improvements. The working day averaged nearly thirteen hours; the mills were cheaply constructed and insanitary; the girls were compelled to deal at company stores, to live in company boarding-houses that were overcrowded and poorly kept; they were taxed to support the local churches; and there were other forms of extortion.<sup>1</sup> To such imposition there was no organized opposition, because the operatives regarded their occupation as temporary, and no distinct and permanent class of wage earners had come into existence. But gradually this supply of native labor diminished. "The clamor for teachers, missionaries, and wives for the great West was drawing away the girls of New England. The opening of new occupations for educated women in the east caused them to withdraw from mechanical employments; the Civil War hastened this withdrawal, for many women were wanted to nurse the sick and wounded, and still more to substitute as teachers and clerks the men who were away in the army."<sup>2</sup> Into the places thus vacated came the immigrants. The Irish, the only race that went in large numbers to New England, did not and could not compete with natives for employment; so long as natives were available, if the Irish entered the mills at all it was as waste pickers or in some such low grade position. But after 1845, as the native girls moved into higher occupations it was the Irish that filled their vacant places. By 1854 half the operatives in the Lowell mills were already Irish, and during the next decade they came to form the main body of factory employees. Another decade saw this race also seeking higher employment, and the first annual report of the Massachusetts Bureau of Labor in 1870 noted that the Irish element in the mills was already falling off and that French Canadians were taking their places.<sup>3</sup> It is evident that immigrant operatives did not displace, but rather replaced, native operatives in the factories, when these turned to other pursuits. The introduction of foreigners to the mills in large numbers,

<sup>1</sup> Abbott, *Journal of Political Economy*, XVI, 684 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, XVII, 27 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Mass. Bureau of Labor, *1st Annual Report*, 91.

however, lowered the social and moral tone and injured the reputation of the employment in the eyes of native families.<sup>1</sup> It thus rendered the return of native girls to this occupation difficult even in the case of those to whom a higher vocation was closed. In the meantime the supply of male labor furnished by immigration led to such changes in the methods of manufacturing that women could no longer be used to the same extent as in earlier years. In the American cotton industry by 1870 men had come to compose more than 40 per cent of all employees; in the woolen mills they were more than 60 per cent. The establishments were much larger; the management was far less paternal; machinery had vastly increased in weight and speed; the processes demanded greater strength and nervous energy; the output was greater; wages were higher; and the cloth industry had more and more come to partake of the character of those other branches of manufacturing for which women's labor is little adapted. By far the greater part of the men whose labor brought about this development were immigrants or their sons. Men of native parentage were not then, and have never been, numerous employed in the cloth factories.

Under the head of "Artisans" in the tables above are included blacksmiths, boot and shoe makers, bakers, butchers, cabinet makers, carriage and wagon makers, carpenters and joiners, cigar makers, coopers, masons, machinists, mechanics (not specified), painters and varnishers, and tailors. Of the persons commonly called artisans there were altogether, in 1870, 1,292,827, which was nearly half of the whole number engaged in manufacturing, mining, and the mechanical arts—a striking indication of the relative importance still maintained by the domestic system and mill production as compared with the factory system. The Europeans were a little more than 27½ per cent of all these artisans; the natives something less than 60 per cent. In these skilled trades the Germans numerically greatly predominated with 11.70 per cent of their number over ten years of age. The British, who were leading as miners and factory operatives, fell behind the Germans in this class with only 7.73 per cent of their number;

<sup>1</sup> Abbott, *Journal of Political Economy*, XVII, 27.

the Scandinavians showed only 5.01 per cent, while among the Irish only 4.63 per cent were skilled craftsmen.

In this as in other branches of mechanical industry, excepting the textile works, the natives with 3.37 per cent were less numerously represented in proportion to their number than any immigrant race. Yet it is interesting to note that, although the tastes and proclivities of the Americans were still prevailingly rural and agricultural rather than urban and mechanical, they had already established a reputation for ingenuity and for technical skill in using tools and mechanical devices. Until the nineteenth century was well advanced ship building had remained almost the only industry in which the American craftsman found incentive or opportunity to display his best qualities. In other fields, inventions were few, traditional methods of work were little altered, and such improvements of processes as occurred were usually introduced from abroad. But the growth of manufacturing, the field of production that peculiarly demands mechanical talent, led the American workman more and more to specialize his training and his labor in that direction. General sagacity, readiness, and adaptability enabled him when once turned to mechanical pursuits to outstrip all competitors; and by the middle of the century native artisans were pronounced by competent observers to be better than those arriving here from any other country.<sup>1</sup> The European mechanic usually found that a trade learned at home had to be relearned in America before he could secure steady employment.<sup>2</sup> The method of working and the tools used in this country differed from those of the Old World, because the objects aimed at differed. In Europe importance was attached to delicacy of detail, to nicety of finish, to durability of the work as giving permanence to the thing made. In America there was in that period little taste for delicate and artistic work; and so swift was the growth of cities and the progress of industry, that one decade frequently saw the work of the previous decade swept away and substituted by new creations. In consequence, the employer here did not require as in Europe durability of materials and processes;

<sup>1</sup> Straten-Ponthoz, 66; Mooney, 152, *et al. plur.*

<sup>2</sup> Büchele, 426.

what he sought was a thing adapted to meet an immediate and temporary need, a thing that could be exploited and used up before the progress of invention and the appearance of new wants made it expedient to abandon it. What chiefly amazed the European was the speed with which the native artisan "turned off" his work. American tools and processes were mainly adapted to that end, and work was rushed to completion with a rapidity that the immigrant was unprepared to emulate.<sup>1</sup> The British workmen were able to adapt themselves to their new environment more readily than any other immigrant race.<sup>2</sup> The Germans were peculiarly slow to do so; and as a result many sources of useful employment were shut against skilful craftsmen of that race by prejudice against their methods.<sup>3</sup> Many of them found work only by accepting low wages; and even those that succeeded best often confessed that, had they worked as hard and denied themselves as much in Germany as they were forced to do in the United States they would have been better off in the old home than in the new.<sup>4</sup>

From this review of the occupations of European immigrants it is obvious that there could have been in the period under review no serious competition between them and native Americans. The natives held possession of the field and had long since become adapted to the New World environment; they owned and controlled the resources of the country, and they created and administered the plans for further development; they were economically as well as politically the ruling class, and while free to choose their own vocation and location, they were in a position to assign the immigrants to such work as they themselves were unwilling or unable to do. In the main, they set the immigrants to the performance of the heavier, coarser work; and to the extent that this new force sufficed to do such work, they were able themselves to withdraw from it and use their energies in higher and more remunerative fields.

Practically all of the immigrants who came to this country in the period under review permanently severed connections with their

<sup>1</sup> Fröbel, 9.

<sup>3</sup> Büchele, 409, 427.

<sup>2</sup> Grund, 10.

<sup>4</sup> Büchele, 409.

native land and made their home in America. "Birds of passage," except to some extent from the French districts of Canada,<sup>1</sup> were exceedingly rare. No statistics were kept of returning immigrants but the fragmentary notices and contemporary comments on them are sufficient evidence that their number was relatively small. Such notices are found at every period of industrial depression but rarely at any other time. Niles stated in his *Register* in 1819 and in 1823 that many Englishmen were obliged to return home because of lack of employment;<sup>2</sup> and in the month of December, 1832, he estimated that as many as 160 went back for the same reason.<sup>3</sup> The return movement must have been small, however, as the British authorities found that in that year only 850 left Canada for England out of a total emigration from England to Canada of 51,746.<sup>4</sup> In 1842, out of 51,800 that arrived at New York, the Custom House reports show that the business depression caused the return of 9,521.<sup>5</sup> The *New York Courier and Enquirer* estimated that in 1854 some 12,000 Europeans went back because of disappointed expectations.<sup>6</sup> Transportation across the Atlantic had not in that period developed to such perfection that working-men could profitably spend a part of the year in the United States and return with their savings to live the rest of the year with their families in Europe.

Practically all that came from Europe had the intention of remaining; and they were rapidly assimilated into the body of American citizens. The swiftness and completeness of this assimilation was startling to contemporary observers; its effectiveness is common knowledge to students of present day conditions in the United States. If ignorant immigrants, as an English writer said, a few years before the Civil War, were allowed to settle by themselves and to share in the government, the result would be dangerous. But they

are taken by the hand on arrival, and sent, not into the forest, but into a more thickly populated country than the one they left, with towns as large as any in Europe except the two capitals, with schools better than any of the same

<sup>1</sup> Bromwell, *History of Emigration*.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 389.

<sup>2</sup> *Niles' Register*, XVII, 36; XXIV, 321.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, LXII, 298.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, XLIII, 241.

<sup>6</sup> Bücheler, 411.

grade here, maintained at the public expense, with work enough for everybody skilful and unskilful, and with better educated persons than themselves to tell them what to do. They labor with the Americans, their children sit daily side by side with American children, reading from the same books, playing the same games, and learning to think the same thoughts. Tremenhoe complains . . . that all history in the public schools is ignored except that of the Republic, and gives us a list of 21 questions prepared for the examination of candidates for admission to the Lowell High School. We are not sure that . . . there is not a profound policy in this. The child of the English or Scotch machinist in Massachusetts, of the German or Irish laborer, of the French or Italian artizan in New York or Philadelphia learns with the language and the institutions the history which tells him the greatness of his new country, and forgetting that he ever had another, he feels with a pride that even Lord Palmerston might envy *Civis Romanus sum*. If the first generation is never quite denationalized, the second is transformed by this process into very good Yankees. The fathers, too, soon get a little property (for there is plenty of labor and little pauperism) and thenceforth are identified with the stability of their new country, and by the time they become citizens, they have some just sense of the dignity they acquire and of the responsibility it entails.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to what is said here it should be remembered that between Americans and the Europeans then coming to the United States racial differences were not strongly marked. This is clearly indicated by the relative frequency of intermarriage. In 1870 when the total number of foreign-born residents was 5,566,546, there were no less than 1,157,170 persons with one parent foreign and the other American.<sup>2</sup> The result of these influences, acting with others that need not here be discussed, is that descendants of the European immigrants in the third generation are seldom to be distinguished from American citizens whose progenitors were here in the eighteenth century.

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<sup>1</sup> *Edinburgh Review*, C., 147.

<sup>2</sup> Ninth Census, "Population," Table IV.